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# CHILD SUPPORT ACCESS TO SEALED COURT FILES

Principle	
Efficient Service Delivery/Operations	
Strategy	Target
Legislative & Advocacy	State

## SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

The Uniform Parentage Act of 1973 broke new ground by giving unmarried fathers legal rights and responsibilities regarding their children, with the basic philosophy, stated in Section 2: “The parent and child relationship extends equally to every child and every parent, regardless of the marital status of the parent.” Still groundbreaking, the Act has since been updated in response to developments like new technologies of assisted conception, but remains outdated in its assumption that any child who is not the offspring of a female and male who are married to each other is marked by stigma and requires sealed court files. In California, this practice is codified in Family Code Section 7643. This creates special difficulties for the Child Support program, since one of its first steps in accepting a new customer is opening a court file on the customer’s behalf. When there is an existing confidential file, Child Support is prohibited from opening a new court file and is required to instead become part of the existing file, without having access to the identification number and contents of the file.

## REQUESTED ACTION

That the County work with its federal and state legislative delegations and key representatives to repeal California Family Code Section 7643 or add “Child Support staff” as noted in bold to section b.) Papers and records pertaining to the action or proceeding that are part of the permanent record of the court are subject to inspection and copying by the parties to the action, their attorneys, **Child Support staff**, and by agents acting pursuant to written authorization from the parties to the action or their attorneys.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT/IMPACT

Legal proceedings can be mysterious and confusing to members of the public, who often do not realize they have an existing court case. The legal assistance provided free of charge by Child Support is compromised when Child Support is unable to access important court records that memorialize established responsibilities and roles.

## COST TO GOVERNMENT

In Santa Barbara, Child Support opens over 2,000 cases a year. An increasing percentage are Uniform Parentage Act cases, and are therefore rejected by the courts until Child Support can gain access to the existing court case and resubmit documentation. This is a major inefficiency that creates unnecessary delays in customer service.

## CONTACT

Carrie Topliffe, Director, Child Support Services Department, (805) 568-2326  
Joseph Toney, Deputy County Executive Officer, County Executive Office, (805)568-3400

# MODERNIZATION OF THE CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM

Principle	
Efficient Service Delivery/Operations	
Strategy	Target
Legislative & Advocacy	Fed/State

## SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

The federal government published on November 17, 2014 the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM): Flexibility, Efficiency and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs. The proposed changes are intended to move the program toward a more family-friendly philosophy that acknowledges Child Support occurs in a context that necessarily includes recognition of employment challenges, custody and visitation arrangements, and co-parenting challenges. Mindful that some of the Child Support enforcement tools can create unnecessary damage to struggling individuals, the proposed changes in regulations also permit families to seek assistance from Child Support without being enrolled in all of its available services. The NPRM has been widely circulated during a public comment period; the Child Support program will benefit from the implementation of the proposed regulations.

## REQUESTED ACTION

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors requests the county's state and federal delegation to aggressively seek implementation of the Child Support NPRM through federal and state legislative regulations.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT/IMPACT

Many aspects of the Child Support program have not been updated in 35 years. The public will benefit from increased program flexibility, efficiency and modernization; adaptations that take advantage of advances in technology; and the correction of technical errors in current regulations.

## COST TO GOVERNMENT

The proposed changes will utilize existing state and federal resources currently budgeted for the Child Support program.

## CONTACT

Carrie Topliffe, Director, Child Support Services Department, (805) 568-2326  
Joseph Toney, Deputy County Executive Officer, County Executive Office, (805)568-3400

# FARM BILL

Principle	
Fiscal Stability	
Strategy	Target
Funding	Federal

## SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

On February 7, 2014 the Agriculture Act of 2014 (Farm Bill) was signed into law. The Farm Bill contains important provisions for ongoing efforts to combat pests and diseases in the U.S. Section 10007 of the Farm Bill explicitly mandates funding for Plant Pest & Disease Management and the National Clean Plant Network. Reauthorization of the Farm Bill was a significant priority for the State of California. The Farm Bill contains funding for pest prevention, an issue of importance to the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association (CACASA). It is widely accepted that additional resources are needed to safeguard America's natural environment and food and fiber systems from the potential destruction caused by invasive pests and diseases. Now more than ever, due to increased international trade and travel, early pest detection is important to prevent significant economic and environmental damage throughout the U.S. Once a pest becomes established or spreads significantly, the cost to eradicate, suppress, or manage it can be in the millions of dollars not to mention the economic costs in lost crops and damage to native ecosystems.

## REQUESTED ACTION

- Continue the goals and focus as provided in the 2014 Farm Bill (heretofore Section 10007).
- CACASA supports an adequately funded national pest and disease program that targets federal funds to known pest pathways based on evidence and data from USDA-APHIS-PPQ Smuggling Interdiction and Trade Compliance (SITC) Program, Center for Plant Health Science and Technology and data from Department of Homeland Security Custom and Border Protection (CBP).
- Support efforts to strengthen inspections at borders and ports of entry to safeguard against invasive pests and diseases.
- Support through legislation or rulemaking, procedures that enhance the authority to hold and inspect packages profiled by detector dogs at U.S. Postal facilities.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT/IMPACT

There are a number of significant invasive species being introduced and detected in California that threaten agriculture and the environment. Continued funding of Pest Exclusion, Pest Detection Trapping and Survey Activities, Rapid Response, Pest Management and Eradication (if feasible), and Public Education Outreach Programs is critical in protecting California's resources.

## COST TO GOVERNMENT

A reduction or elimination of federal and state funding for the State and counties to perform early pest detection and surveillance activities will result in either an additional cost to local governments to cover the costs of these critical pest exclusion activities or a reduction or elimination of these services all together. This will lead to the agricultural industry, the public and environment being put at risk for further invasive pest infestations. California agricultural losses to exotic pests exceed \$3 billion annually.

## CONTACT

Cathleen M. Fisher, Agricultural Commissioner, Agriculture Department (805) 681-5600  
Joseph Toney, Deputy County Executive Officer, County Executive Office, (805)568-3400

# PUBLIC SAFETY

Principle	
Fiscal Stability	
Strategy	Target
Funding, Legislative, & Advocacy	Fed/State

## SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

The tenet of the public safety departments in the County of Santa Barbara is the protection of life and property through highly competent delivery of emergency response, fire prevention services, constitutional and effective law enforcement, custody, and rehabilitation services that provide a high level of safety to residents and visitors. The public is well served when victims of crime are protected and individuals charged with a crime have equal access to justice, are prosecuted and defended diligently and ethically, and all involved parties receive a fair and timely resolution of their case.

## REQUESTED ACTION

Seek out support for local public safety efforts and departments through additional funding, legislative improvements, and advocacy.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT/IMPACT

Improving the means and tools for the Public Safety Departments will allow them to provide quality public service to the people in Santa Barbara County by:

- Safeguarding them from the impacts of crime, fires, medical emergencies, and disasters
- Providing information and recommendations to the Courts
- Enforcing the laws and providing correctional services
- Enforcing court orders and post-release community supervision conditions
- Requiring offender responsibility and accountability
- Delivering safe and effective juvenile detention, treatment, and rehabilitation services
- Prosecuting the guilty, protecting the innocent, and preventing crime
- Ensuring constitutional rights of all
- Delivering effective and timely law enforcement services

## COST TO GOVERNMENT

Public safety services can be very costly and demanding on local government budgets. This plank aims to seek out additional funding and resources without negatively impacting the County's budget. There is no immediate or additional cost incurred directly.

## CONTACT

Joseph Toney, Deputy County Executive Officer, County Executive Office, (805)568-3400

# CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

Principle	
Health & Human Services	
Strategy	Target
Advocacy	Federal/State

## SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

The safety, permanency, and well-being of Children are a top priority in California; however, sufficient funding is needed to adequately address the specific needs of our children and families. It is well-founded that children do best when raised within their family of origin as long as they can do so safely. It is less costly to our children and the community at large to preserve families and when removal is necessary to safely reunify children as soon as possible. When this is not possible adequate services and supports must be provided to children in foster care to ensure that they are able to achieve permanency or successfully transition to independence. Therefore, increased Federal and State funding for services and support is needed in order to improve the outcomes of children and youth in the Child Welfare system.

AB 403 (Stone, Statutes of 2015) requires significant changes to the placement and care provided to children in foster care, including increasing capacity and support to resource families in California and improving outcomes for children and youth in our child welfare system. The proposed state budget does not sufficiently fund all of the statutory mandates and legislative requirements that need to be met to implement this significant reform beginning January 1, 2017.

Increased federal funding is also needed to address the service needs of youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Specifically, in 2014, Congress approved the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (HR 4980). The new law makes several federal reforms to better serve foster youth and includes provisions that focus on the emerging issue of sex trafficking of minors. In light of the new federal law and rollout of the related state program, additional funding is necessary to enable counties to meet the state and federal requirements and expectations for the specialized services to be provided to this traumatized population of children

## REQUESTED ACTION

The County requests that its delegation advocate at the Federal and State level to strategically increase funding for Child Welfare Services programs so that our children and families may be more adequately served and that the county remains aligned with the identified priorities and program trends at both the state and federal levels.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT/IMPACT

The costs of child abuse and neglect are those costs associated with the consequences or impact of maltreatment on children. As a result of being victims of abuse and neglect, many children require special education services as well as early intervention services to manage developmental delays. Maltreated children are also more likely to engage in juvenile delinquency and adult criminal behavior compared to children who do not experience abuse and neglect. Furthermore, research demonstrates that children who experience abuse are disproportionately more likely to experience homelessness as adults. As a result, child maltreatment leads to additional housing, juvenile justice and adult criminal justice expenditures. The developmental and behavioral impact of child maltreatment also leads to lost worker productivity.

## COST TO GOVERNMENT

The social and economic costs of child abuse and neglect can be difficult to quantify. Some costs are straightforward and directly related to maltreatment, such as hospital costs for medical treatment of injuries sustained as a result of physical abuse and foster care costs resulting from the removal of children when they cannot remain safely with their families. Other costs, less directly tied to the incidence of abuse, include lower academic achievement, adult criminality, and lifelong mental health problems. Both direct and indirect costs impact our society and economy. Survivor needs are likely to impact multiple systems, including health care, education, criminal justice and social services. A 2012 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated the average lifetime cost per victim of nonfatal child maltreatment at \$210,000.

## CONTACT

Daniel Nielson, Director/Department of Social Services, (805) 681-4451

Joseph Toney, Deputy County Executive Officer, County Executive Office, (805)568-3400

# ORGANIZED DELIVERY SYSTEM

Principle	
Health and Human Services	
Strategy	Target
Advocacy	Fed/State

## SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

Changes in federal law through the Affordable Care Act and federal Parity laws now ensure that individuals have the same access to mental health and substance abuse treatment as they do to medical services. The county's Department of Behavioral Wellness is developing a comprehensive proposal to create an Organized Delivery System (ODS) to address the needs for substance abuse treatment services within Santa Barbara County as part of the state's 1115 B Waiver with the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

## REQUESTED ACTION

Advocate for expanded substance abuse treatment. There is a growing opioid epidemic and increased overdose deaths nationally and in the County.. Treatment is the most effective way to reduce the damage done to the individual, the family and the community by addiction to alcohol and other drugs, but too often treatment options have been limited by inadequate funding for substance abuse treatment programs. Federal Parity laws and the Affordable Care Act have expanded access to these life-saving services, and California has been granted permission from CMS to allow counties to develop comprehensive treatment services based on community defined needs and is reimbursable by federal MediCal funding. Santa Barbara has engaged in a community planning process and is developing a proposed ODS for the County.. Rates for the services will be negotiated by the state separately with each county, and we request support to negotiate favorable rates to create robust and sustainable services in Santa Barbara. This is especially important as the cost of creating and maintaining services can be quite high relative to other counties due to the lack of affordable real estate.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT/IMPACT

Expanded substance abuse treatment will lead to reduced addiction, decreased childhood trauma, higher employment and quality of life, reduced arrests, increased family reunification, decreased premature death, and reduced impact on criminal justice system.

## COST TO GOVERNMENT

Federal funding will support the majority of Drug MediCal (DMC) services, as this is an expansion of the DMC benefits.

## CONTACT

Alice Gleghorn, Ph.D., Director, Behavioral Wellness, (805)568-5233  
Joseph Toney, Deputy County Executive Officer, County Executive Office, (805)568-3400

# SENIOR SERVICES FUNDING

Principle	
Health & Human Services	
Strategy	Target
Advocacy	Federal/State

## SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

Our aging population is a priority in our County and state alike. Additional resources are needed beyond what the Older Americans Act provides to increase service capacity to meet the growing demand, not only for basic needs like food, transportation, and housing but also for workforce development i.e.: geriatric specialization and caregiver support.

According to 2013 Census data there are over 59,000 seniors age 65 and older within the County of Santa Barbara (14% of the County's population). This number is expected to double by the year 2050 placing additional demands on a variety of health and human services programs. Key issues facing seniors within the County are in-home care, housing, as well as public assistance needs for those that live below the poverty level. It is critical to ensure that the programs and services that are needed to meet the needs of the growing population and low-income seniors are available.

## REQUESTED ACTION

The County requests that its delegation advocate on the Federal and State level to increase funding and support for services that promote health and well-being thereby enhancing the quality of life of low-income seniors.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT/IMPACT

California's age 65 and older population stands at 4 million, which is projected to double to over 8 million by 2030. Additionally, the projected average life expectancy has increased to over 81 years for women and over 76 years for men.

While seniors are the fastest growing sector of the population, little funding is provided to address overall spectrum of needs faced by individuals as they age. Without assistance, seniors often lack the ability to remain in their own homes and thus must resort to assisted living facilities at extraordinary costs or rely on family members and professional or informal caregivers for continued care. In addition, as a result of increasing medical needs, seniors utilize emergency rooms and public clinics at an increasing rate as a result of lack of appropriate health coverage.

The SCAN Foundation highlights Medicare-Medicaid integration, person-centered care and long-term care financing as key issues to meeting the increasing demands. A comprehensive program of safety net services provided via community providers and governmental agencies, provides for the opportunity for seniors to remain independent for a longer period and provides for the spectrum of health and human services needs required to age with dignity.

## COST TO GOVERNMENT

Preventative, proactive, geriatric specific services for the aging population is more cost effective and better practice in comparison to institutional placements. Evidence confirms that skillful case management community centered services, nutritional based programs is important in maintaining the health and functional independence of older adults. Said services can reduce costly hospital admissions and delay nursing home placement. A majority of older adults in the US have diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol or a combination of these chronic conditions. These conditions can be successfully managed with appropriate interventions that will improve health and quality of life. Unchecked, these conditions result in increased costs.

## CONTACT

Daniel Nielson, Director/Department of Social Services, (805) 681-4451  
Joseph Toney, Deputy County Executive Officer, County Executive Office, (805)568-3400

# STATE SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING (CODB)

Principle	
Health & Human Services	
Strategy	Target
Advocacy	State

## SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

For the County Department of Social Services (DSS), the State pays a portion of the costs associated with providing mandated public assistance programs ("cost of doing business" or "CODB"). However, the State's contribution has not kept pace with inflation or the actual costs of administering mandated programs. Rather, the state has frozen its funding for administration and overhead at the 2001 level. Although the department receives funding for caseload growth, absence of CODB funding prevents the department from pursuing new technologies and increased efficiencies, or achieving staffing levels that adequately address the needs of the clients and fulfill the mandated timelines established by the State and Federal government. DSS has deferred funding other needs in lieu of programmatic cuts, but cannot continue this practice indefinitely. The State does not plan to provide these resources in the foreseeable future. Although it has been mitigated up to now by DSS, the full impact will begin to negatively impact the Department's ability to deliver mandated services.

## REQUESTED ACTION

The County requests that its delegation support efforts to restore appropriate funding levels immediately and continuing into the future. Counties do not have the discretionary income to continue to backfill the states responsibilities for funding these programs.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT/IMPACT

As a result of the many years of withholding CODB and a compounding of the shortfall by adding Medi-Cal CODB withholding to the equation, it has eroded DSS's ability to maintain adequate staffing levels to meet client demand. Consequently, clients experience longer wait times and delays in eligibility determinations, which has increases food insecurity, homelessness, and delayed access to medical coverage. Staffing shortfalls also result in a delay in investigations which may result in children, adults, and disabled individuals being left in an abusive or negligent situation.

## COST TO GOVERNMENT

The state's failure to fund actual county cost increases (e.g. salary and benefit increases) has led to a funding gap of nearly \$1 billion annually. Freezing funding also shifts costs to counties and increases the county share of program costs above statutory sharing ratios. Continued under-funding by the State has resulted in staffing decreases without a comparable decrease in State mandated programs. Should this continue, it would mean a significant decrease in service delivery, create performance inefficiencies, and impact the ability to meet mandated timeframes while simultaneously exposing the county to increased liability particularly in Child Welfare Services. Additionally, failure to meet mandated performance measures in programs may lead to fiscal sanctions being imposed by the Federal and State governments.

The Department estimates an \$18.4 million funding gap for FY 15-16 due to costs of administering programs without corresponding increases in State funding. The Department has used reserves, held vacancies, and not added positions needed for workload and Department operations in an effort to close this funding gap each year. While these strategies may temporarily close the gap, they create both short and long-term impacts to the Department's operations and client services.

## CONTACT

Daniel Neilson, Director, Department of Social Services, (805)346-7101  
Joseph Toney, Deputy County Executive Officer, County Executive Office, (805)568-3400